

The John Birch Society

RELATIVELY UNKNOWN until recent months, the John Birch Society has suddenly become a point of controversy, not only by the man in the street but in the halls of Congress.

Proponents and opponents of the society have expressed their opinions, some congressmen and Senators have discussed the society and its aims, but in the main the aims of the society have not been made too clear.

The John Birch Society came into being in 1958, when a retired manufacturer named Robert Welch of Belmont, Mass., organized the society and announced its aim was to fight Communism in the United States, certainly a worthy aim.

WHETHER OR NOT this is the sole aim of the society or whether it is being used as a popular front seems unclear yet and it has been suggested the society be investigated by the Federal authorities.

An honest investigation could harm no one. No honest man needs fear a policeman and no honest organization needs fear the investigators of the Federal government.

Back of the society's formation are some things with which most Americans would disagree. It is charged that in a letter written by Welch before he set up the society, he charged that President Eisenhower, his brother, Dr. Milton Eisenhower, the late Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and his brother Allen Dulles head of the Central Intelligence Agency were members of the Communist underground.

ONE OF THE AIMS of the new society is to impeach Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren for some of the decisions he has handed down.

A political scientist would classify the John Birch Society as ultra conservative. This in itself certainly cannot be classed as subversion.

What interests and perhaps intrigues many is the secrecy which surrounds the society and its workings. This again is not necessarily subversion, but an organization devoted to the preservation of freedom by attempting to destroy Communism need not necessarily be secretive in its aims or its workings.

The society gets its name from a young fundamentalist Baptist missionary from Georgia who served as an Intelligence Officer in World War II, in China. Ten days after V-J Day he was killed by Chinese Communists. He was 27 years of age.

IT IS SAID WELCH never knew Birch, but after reading the account of his life and works, took the name for that of his new society. Birch's family has not opposed the use of the name.

In some parts of the country it has been charged that members of the society adopted questionable methods in their work.

It all amounts to this.

If the John Birch Society is a genuine American organization devoted to halting Communism it deserves support.

If however it is using this aim as a front for more devious aims this should be known.

In the past 20 years many organizations have sprung up in the United States, many of them with high sounding names but questionable if not actually subversive aims.

MOST OF THE BAD ONES were placed upon the Un-American list by the Department of Justice. Their true aims were made known and the mortality list was high, but they were replaced with other outfits with fancy names.

US Senator Barry Goldwater prophesies there will be no investigation of the John Birch Society, giving as his reason, "there would be a lot of embarrassed people in Washington if a probe was made."

Embarrassed about what?

If the society is free of any subversive activity, and is genuinely interested in putting down Communism, then there seems there would be nothing to embarrass anybody. If there is, the people should know it.

An investigation by the proper authorities might clear the air and put the society in its proper perspective.